

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Prior to this amendment, claims 1-31 were pending. In this amendment, claim 20 is amended, and no claims are canceled or added. Thus, after entry of this amendment, claims 1-31 will remain pending.

Allowed claims

Applicants note with appreciation the indicated allowability of claims 1-19 and 23-28.

Rejection under 35 USC § 112, indefiniteness

Claims 20-22 and 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. As amended, claim 20 distinctly claims an embodiment of the present invention, which is partly described, e.g., in paragraphs 104-106 of the specification. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejection under 35 USC 102(b), Khan

Claims 20-22, 29, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Khan (5,568,332).

Claim 20 is allowable as Khan does not teach or suggest each and every element of claim 20. For example, claim 20 recites:

at least one supporting structure extending from the first supporting area to a leading edge side of the flexure tongue, wherein the leading edge side consists of the leading edge of the flexure tongue and side edges of the flexure tongue existing between a center of a mounting position of said slider and the leading edge, and wherein the at least one supporting structure is a sole structure for supporting said flexure tongue.

In Khan, support for flexure finger 40 occurs at a trailing edge of flexure finger 40, i.e. the edge near aperture ears 38. *See Khan*, Figures 4-7. In contrast, claim 20 recites a supporting structure extending to a leading edge side. Thus, as the flexure tongue in Khan is

supported at the trailing edge, Khan does not teach or suggest supporting a flexure tongue at a leading edge side, as recited in claim 20. For at least these reasons, claim 20 is allowable over Khan. As claim 20 is allowable, claims 21-22 and 29-31 which depend therefrom are also allowable for at least the same rationale.

Rejection under 35 USC 102(a), Ikeda

Claims 20-22 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being clearly anticipated by Ikeda et al. (6,549,374).

Claim 20 is allowable as Ikeda does not teach or suggest each and every element of claim 20. For example, claim 20 recites:

at least one supporting structure extending from the first supporting area to a leading edge side of the flexure tongue, wherein the leading edge side consists of the leading edge of the flexure tongue and side edges of the flexure tongue existing between a center of a mounting position of said slider and the leading edge, and wherein the at least one supporting structure is a sole structure for supporting said flexure tongue.

In Ikeda, the displacement portion 41, to which the slider 28 is attached, is supported at the sides by hinges 45A and 45B. *See Ikeda*, Figures 8 and col.4 lines 44-48. Hinges 45A and 45B attach at the center of displacement portion 41. *Id.*, Figures 8 and 9. In contrast, claim 20 recites “*at least one supporting structure extending*” to the leading edge or a side edge “*between a center of a mounting position of said slider and the leading edge.*” As Ikeda supports the displacement portion 41 at a side at the center and not between the center and the leading edge, Ikeda does not teach or suggest this claim limitation.

Furthermore, in the embodiment of FIG. 15, Ikeda supports displacement portion 41 at both the leading edge and the trailing edge with hinges 45 C and 45D. *Id.*, Figure 15 and col. 6 lines 1-13. Accordingly, Ikeda does not teach or suggest where “*the at least one supporting structure is a sole structure for supporting said flexure tongue,*” as recited in claim 20.

For at least these reasons, claim 20 is allowable over Ikeda. As claim 20 is allowable, claims 21-22 and 29-31 which depend therefrom are also allowable for at least the same rationale.

Rejection under 35 USC 102(a), Girard

Claims 20-22 and 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Girard (6,741,426).

Claim 20 is allowable as Girard does not teach or suggest each and every element of claim 20. For example, claim 20 recites:

at least one supporting structure extending from the first supporting area to a leading edge side of the flexure tongue, wherein the leading edge side consists of the leading edge of the flexure tongue and side edges of the flexure tongue existing between a center of a mounting position of said slider and the leading edge, and wherein the at least one supporting structure is a sole structure for supporting said flexure tongue.

In Girard, support for flexure tongue 60 occurs at a trailing edge of flexure tongue 60. *See Girard*, Figures 4-7. In contrast, claim 20 recites a supporting structure extending to a leading edge side. Thus, as the flexure tongue in Girard is supported at the trailing edge, Girard does not teach or suggest supporting a flexure tongue at a leading edge side, as recited in claim 20. For at least these reasons, claim 20 is allowable over Girard. As claim 20 is allowable, claims 21-22 and 29-31 which depend therefrom are also allowable for at least the same rationale.

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PATENT

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 415-576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,



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